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*Drawing by SPC Michael Stone
of A/4-31*

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Polar Bear Tracks



4TH BATTALION, 31ST INFANTRY REGIMENT NEWS

FORT DRUM NEW YORK

Farewell to the senior enlisted Polar Bear

By PFC Gabriel Vieira

The Polar Bears of the 4th Battalion 31st Infantry regiment said farewell to their most senior enlisted leader, presenting him with the battalion colors just prior his change of responsibility ceremony.

Command Sergeant Major Jimenez entered the Army in 1979; he attended Basic Training at Ft Knox, KY and Advance Individual Training at Ft Benning, GA as an 11B, Infantryman.

CSM Jimenez's previous assignments include A Company, 1st Bn, 22nd In, Ft Carson, CO; B Company, 1st Bn, 13th In, Baumholder, Germany; B Company, 6th Bn, 31st In, (OPFOR), Ft Irwin, CA; B Company, 4th Bn, 8th In, Mannheim, Germany; Light Fighters School, Ft Drum, NY; A Company, 5th Bn, 14th In, Scofield Barracks, HI; B Company, 1st Bn, 32nd In, Ft Drum, NY; C Company, 1st Bn, 61st In, Ft Jackson, SC; B, HHC, 2nd Bn, 22nd In, Ft Drum, NY; C, HHC, 1st Bn, 87th In, Ft Drum, NY. In addition to this he served in Operation Restore/Uphold Democracy, Operation Enduring Freedom 4 and Operation Iraqi Freedom 4.5.

CSM Jimenez's awards and decorations include a Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (4 OLC), Army Commendation Medal (4 OLC), Army Achievement Medal (12 OLC), Good Conduct Medal (8th Award), National Defense Medal with Bronze Star, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (2nd Award), Global War on Terrorism Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, NATO Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon (Numeral 3), Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon (3 Award), Air Assault Badge, Drill Sergeant Badge, Expert Infantryman's Badge and the Combat Infantryman's Badge.

Command Sergeant Major Alexander Jimenez post Army career plans are to reside in the Cartridge, NY area with his family.

Command Sergeant Major Benjamin Jones enlisted in the US Army in September 1987. His previous assignments include three assignments with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Fort Campbell, Kentucky; 2-4 Infantry, Germany; Ranger Training Brigade, Fort Benning, Georgia; USASMA, Fort Bliss, Texas; and two assignments with 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) at Fort Drum. CSM Jones has served from rifleman to command sergeant major. Additionally, he has served as a Ranger Instructor at the United States Army Ranger School at Fort Benning. He also served as the Operations Sergeant Major for 2-15 Field Artillery Regiment and as a Task Force CSM for a newly formed provisional Task Force during OIF 06-08.

CSM Jones' awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal (1 OLC), Meritorious Service Medal (3 OLC), Army Commendation Medal (2 OLC), Army Achievement Medal (8 OLC), Good Conduct Medal (sixth award), National Defense Service Medal with Bronze Star, Armed Force Expeditionary Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal with Arrow Head device with two Bronze Stars, Kosovo Campaign Medal with Bronze Star, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, Non-Commissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon (4th numeral), Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon (3rd award), NATO Medal with Bronze Star, Multinational Force and Observers Medal, Saudi Arabian Medal for the Liberation of Kuwait with device, Kuwaiti Medal for the Liberation of Kuwait, Army Valorous Unit Award, Army Meritorious Unit Commendation, Army Superior Unit Award, Ranger Tab, Expert Infantryman Badge, Combat Infantryman Badge (2nd award), Master Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, Pathfinder Badge, ITC Instructor Badge, German Schutzenschnur Badge Bronze, German Leistungsabzeichen Badge Bronze, Honduran Parachute Badge, and Chilean Parachute Badge. He is a recipient of the Order of Saint Maurice (Centurion) medal, Bronze de Fleury Medal, Saint Barbara Medal and has been inducted as a Distinguished and Honorary member of the 502nd Infantry Regiment. He has earned an associate's degree with honors from Excelsior College in Administration Management and is currently working towards a bachelor degree in Liberal Arts. CSM Jones is married to the former Leah Hail Sanford of Erlanger, KY. They have three children, Tanner 16, McKenzie 13, and Madeilyn 11.



POLAR BEAR BIATHLON

By PFC Gabriel Vieira

In February the 4TH Battalion 31st Infantry conducted their annual Leadership Biathlon which began with an indoor range to try each teams abilities to fire the M9 pistol and transition to the M4 rifle with only two minutes to fire 75 total rounds from both firearms at one 25 meter silhouette. The Biathlon culminated with a grueling cross country ski competition and stress shoot executed by the Polar Bear Association (PBA).

The Polar Bear Association then completed the biathlon on the 27th of February with the cross country ski and stress shoot that consisted of a 5k cross country ski with two M4 ranges and a M4 to M9 transition range . In the end HHC came out on top with a score of 672, followed closely by B co with a score of 637. To all that competed and didn't come out on top there is always next year.



TEAM	RANGE 21	RANGE 22	RANGE 23	SKI TIME	FINIAL POINTS	POSITION
HHC	167	350	145	2 HR 21 MIN	672	1 ST
STAFF	118	309	127	1 HR 43 MIN	572	5 TH
A	170	356	83	1 HR 54 MIN	625	4 TH
B	152	323	142	1 HR 42 MIN	637	2 ND
C	147	320	95	2 HR 49 MIN	562	6 TH
D	153	340	134	2 HR 26 MIN	635	3 RD
F	105	286	83	2 HR 31 MIN	480	7 TH



POLAR BEARS DONATE TO THE RED CROSS

By PFC Gabriel Vieira

On the 5th and 6th of February the Polar Bears sponsored the Red Cross blood drive at the Fort Drum USO. Even though not everyone in the battalion was able to donate due to recent deployments and so forth, it turned out to be quite a success with Charlie Company Fire Support Team team acting as volunteers (escorting donors and passing out snacks) and about 20 soldiers from each company to donate while others from Fort Drum stopped by to donate. when I spoke with Staff Sergeant Jamie McCarrick he said "it was a great cause and even though needles aren't my thing you never know who's life you may save by donating".



"..Needles really aren't my thing..." SSG Jamie McCarrick HHC/ 4-31 said as he was prepped to become a donor at the 4-31 IN sponsored blood drive (photo by PFC

JANE "WAYNE" DAY

By PFC Gabriel Vieira

To add a twist to this years Polar Bear Leader Marksmanship competition, it was decided that the Polar Bear Association would invite the Battalion Family Readiness Group (FRG) leaders to participate in the indoor M9 pistol/ M4 rifle transition range. Their respective Company Commanders and First Sergeants coached them on the range. The team building and leadership exercise brought the Soldier leadership together with the Family leadership creating a fun and unique training environment. The FRG got the chance to "...put on the gear and experience what the soldiers go through at a live fire range..." said Land and Ammo NCO SSG Jamie McCarrick. "It gave them the chance to see how difficult it is to shoot in a stressful environment." he said, it also "acted as a kind of team building event for the Company Commanders, First Sergeants and the FRG members.". The FRG members all received a chance to fire at a 25 meter target with both the M4 and M9. Surprisingly even as highly experienced as the Key Leadership is they seemed to be no match for these sharp shooting wives, with the Battalion Executive Officers wife Mrs. Sharon Henry shooting the best out of the FRG which was too much even for some of the PBA. When all was said and done I'm sure that these FRG members husbands will defiantly feel a little closer and safer with their sharp shooting spouses.



Commanders coach their FRG counter parts as they let the rounds fly down range as part of this team building exercise. (photo by PFC Gabriel Vieira)



By LT Korbut 4-31

HHC MEDO

THE SHANGHAI BOWL

The history of the Shanghai Bowl dates back to 1932 when the 31st Infantry was deployed from Manila in order to protect the Shanghai International Settlement. Fighting between the Japanese and Chinese troops left the Shanghai area in shambles. The International Settlement proved to be the only adequate and secured living area within the region. In April of 1932, officers of the 31st Regiment moved their families from Manila to a hotel in the International Settlement. After the mission concluded, the 31st regiment and family members returned to Manila. The officers memorialized their mission to Shanghai by purchasing the silver punch bowl and 29 ornamental cups with their own money. The set cost \$1,600 in 1932, and would cost over \$25,000 if a similar set were to be bought today.



During the winter of 1941, the 31st Regiment was responsible for the withdrawal of American and Philippine forces to the Bataan Peninsula. They defended the peninsula for a total of four months while facing starvation, disease, and insufficient supplies. Major General King ordered the 31st to surrender on April 9, 1942. After receiving this order, Captain Short led a detail to bury the bowl between the Malinta and Navy tunnels on Corregidor beach. The bowl remained there until Captain Short was released as a prisoner. He then immediately returned to the beach and recovered the buried bowl.

The Shanghai bowl has time-honored importance and therefore must be cleaned regularly. It is tradition that junior officers who are new to the unit must be tasked with cleaning the bowl. As the battalion completed its move to the current location it became imperative to coordinate with the Fort Drum installation to encase and secure the priceless artifact for the unit. Fort Drum Public works remained persistent to find the craftsman who originally completed the case for the battalion, and the right people to complete the glass work and the alarm system to secure the Shanghai Bowl at home with the men of the 4th battalion 31st Infantry regiment.



On February 11, 2009 the bowl came out of storage from its deployment in Iraq during the 2006-2007 tour. One junior officer from each company was tasked to clean the bowl and I had the opportunity to do so. Without reading the history, one can tell that it has tremendous significance to our unit. Each of the cups has an officer's name and company inscribed on it from the original unit. Some cups are more battered than others; however, one can tell that this Shanghai Bowl has been maintained to the best of its junior officer's abilities. Even after being used as the punch bowl for countless military functions, it still maintains the brilliant surface due to their preservation. I recommend every soldier of our battalion to take a look at the bowl which is now located in the lobby of the 4-31 headquarters building.



By PFC Gabriel Vieira

POLAR BEAR REENLISTMENTS

As the polar bears get ready for another mission Polar Bears from across the battalion take what may be the last bonus and chance to PCS to another unit. For the months of February and March by company the reenlistments by company are:

A Co

PFC Conchas, Marcos D. Reenlisted for Irwin CA

PFC Gee, Steven C. Reenlisted for Hawaii

PV2 Musial, Christopher T. Reenlisted for Ft Benning

PV2 Harder, Timothy R. Reenlisted 4 years Ft Stewart



B Co

PV2 Behrens, Brian R. Reenlisted for Fort Carson

SGT Gaston, Josue P. Reenlisted for 2 years/ College

SPC Crume, Theodore P. Reenlisted for 3 years Fort Stewart,

SPC Thomas, Brandt M. Reenlisted for 3 years, Natic Lab, MA

PFC Wyckoff, Stephen D. Reenlisted for 4 years Ft Lewis WA



C Co

SGT Leigh, Anthony T. Reenlisted for Current Station

SSG Russell, Jeremy D Reenlisted for Current Station

SPC Sheckels, Christopher M Reenlisted 4 years, Fort Bliss Tx,

PFC Smith, Brian Reenlisted for 4 years Fort Stewart GA

PFC Hebert, Ricky T. Reenlisted for 2 years

SGT Sedlyar, Dennis A Reenlisted 6 years Current Station

PFC Klipp, Michael C. Reenlisted for Hawaii

PFC Costlow, Bryan L. Reenlisted for Fort Hood



SPC Smith, Russell D Reenlisted 2 years / wants Benning

SPC Johnson, Tyler R. Reenlisted for 2years / College

SSG Reissener, Alaric L Reenlisted for 2 years, Fort Jackson

PFC Babcock, Daniel R. Reenlisted for 4 years, Fort Lewis WA

PFC Abadilla, Justin Reenlisted for 4 years Fort Irwin CA



PFC Sadler, Saul M Reenlisted for Germany

SSG Rodriguezreyes, William Reenlisted for Indefinite

PFC Vasquez, Geraldo Reenlisted for 2 years

PFC Graham, Lethailous D. Reenlisted for 4 years, Germany



By PFC Gabriel Vieira

POLAR BEAR REENLISTMENTS (cont)

DCO

SSG Van scoy, Nathaniel C. Reenlisted for Current Station 5 years

PFC Rogowski, Lukasz J. Reenlisted for 5 years Current Station

SGT Moran, Matthew C. Reenlisted 4 years Fort Bliss Tx

HHC

SPC Mckee, Nathan M Reenlisted for Fort Sam Houston, Tx

SPC Stout, Brian M Reenlisted for 2 years, Fort Sill OK

SPC Baker, Derick R Reenlisted for 3years, Fort Carson



SPC Fiedtkou, Earl I. Reenlisted for 2 years, Needs of the

PFC Wade, Robert J Reenlisted for 2 years Fort Polk LA



HHC CHANGE OF COMMAND

By PFC Gabriel Vieira

Just prior to block leave Captain Joseph Tomasello Relinquished command to Captain Johnathan Leming, the Head Hunters watched as there commander ended his stay with the Polar Bears and another's journey began.

Captain Joseph L. Tomasello is from Shafter, CA and entered the Army in July 2000 where he completed basic training and AIT at Ft. Leonard Wood, MO and was commissioned an Infantry Officer from the United States Military Academy in May of 2005. CPT Tomasello's enlisted assignment was to the 40th Engineer Battalion in Baumholder, Germany, where he deployed to Kosovo as part of TF Falcon. Upon

graduation from the Infantry Officer Basic Course, he was assigned to D Company, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment at Fort Drum, NY. There he served as a Platoon Leader from August 2006 to November 2007 and deployed with his platoon to Iraq in support of OIF 06-08. Shortly after redeployment, CPT Tomasello was assigned to HHC as the company's executive officer. In August of 2008, he assumed command of HHC. CPT Tomasello's next assignment is to 3BCT, Fort Drum, NY. CPT Tomasello has a bachelor's degree in Sociology from the United States Military Academy and his awards and decorations include the Combat Infantryman's Badge and the Expert Infantryman's Badge.

The in coming commander Captain Johnathan L. Leming is from San Antonio, TX and entered the Army in 2001. He graduated from OCS and was commissioned an Infantry Officer on 11 October 2001. After completing the Infantry Officer Basic Course, CPT Leming's career began in 1-8 IN at Ft. Carson, CO. There he served as Asst. S-1 and deployed with the Battalion in support of OIF 1. HE was reassigned to Charlie CO in Iraq where served as a platoon leader from May 2003 to May 2004. Upon redeployment, CPT Leming served in the BN S-3 shop until September 2004. CPT Leming was then assigned to 1-19 IN, Fort Benning, GA as XO for Echo Company. He served there nine months before taking command of Echo Company in May 2005. He was then assigned to Fort Riley, KS as the Operations Officer/Advisor for 2-4-2 MiTT in Iraq from January 2007 to January 2008. He arrived to 2BCT, 10th MTN in October and 4-31 IN in December 2008.

CPT Leming has a bachelor's degree in Political Science and History from Texas State University and his military education includes: The Infantry Officer's Basic Course, Mechanized Leader's Course, MiTT Advisor Training, and the Maneuver Captain's Career Course. His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal with "V" device and three Oak Leaf Clusters, the Army Achievement Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, and the Parachutists Badge.



The Head Hunters of HHC/ 4-31 IN stand ready to receive there new commander as CPT Joseph Tomasello relinquished command to CPT Johnathan Leming (photo by PFC Gabriel Vieira)



HHC IN ACTION

By Nickalous A. Korb 1LT
Medical Platoon Leader

The Headquarters Company (HHC) of 4-31 INF has had an eventful two months since the beginning of the year. The start of 2009 began when Captain Leming assumed command of the company. He jumped right into preparing for off post training at Fort Pickett during the March – April timeframe. The training tempo has been high to ensure HHC is equipped and ready for our late 2009 deployment date to Afghanistan.

The Scout Platoon has seen a 70% change in personnel since the New Year and most of their Soldiers are fresh from basic training. LT Rieck has made it his mission to preserve the reputation of having the most elite platoon in the Battalion. SFC Harris, the Platoon Sergeant, recently returned from Ranger school and received the honor graduate award of his class. Since his



return, SFC Harris has been training his Soldiers on weapon systems and battle drills daily. Weather does not stop their training and almost every day the Soldiers complete common task drills. The platoon leadership is rebuilding their platoon to be the best Polar Bears in the Battalion.



4-31's Medical Platoon has reconstructed their training plan to accommodate for more medical instruction. Every two weeks, two Medics shadow medical staff at Guthrie Clinic to increase their familiarity with equipment not seen or experienced at their aid station. A program was also established which has the Battalion Physician Assistant, Captain Cameron, teaching medical training each week to ensure their expertise is maintained. As the Medical Platoon Leader for 4-31, I see these newly implemented plans working well for our platoon and know these Medics will not question their knowledge when Afghanistan tests them.

Realizing the intensive training program for the year, SFC Hagman created standard operating procedures (SOP) for his platoon to ensure his Soldiers can complete their missions as rapidly and accurately as possible. LT Burgess tested these procedures with mounted situational exercise training and it proved they are proficient mortar men. The final test came when they conducted live fire exercises. This type of training will ensure these Soldiers will have the competence and confidence needed when they reach enemy soil.

One can see that the company has been hard at work ensuring they are properly trained and geared up for the fight in Afghanistan. The training HHC has been conducting reinforces the Soldiers Creed that we stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy the enemies of the United States of America in close combat.



A CO 99% CERTIFIED FOR COMBAT

By John F. Dolan 2LT
A/ 4-31 1st Platoon Leader

Alpha Company "Immortals", 4-31 INF returned from Block leave and hit the ground running, setting the stage for a 3-day range density week. With a clear mission, set by the new company commander, CPT Stepter, "To certify Alpha Company on all individual weapons systems" the Immortals set out to certify 144 deployable soldiers on all primary, secondary, and indirect fire weapon systems.

As has become the tradition of the "Immortals", the mission was accomplished, and in three days, 99% of all A Co deployable soldiers were certified on all weapons systems to include M-4, M249, M240B, M9, M500, and all indirect fire Systems. Despite sub-zero temperatures, reaching a low of -27 degrees, a number of "Immortal" soldiers achieved expert scores on each weapon system, and set a new standard for successful and efficient company certification.



2nd PLT executes M249/M240B qualifications



Local Training Area PLT Battle Drills: Platoons were given the opportunity to Train at the Local Training Area (LTA). This uninterrupted training time afforded PLTs the much needed time to train in sub-zero temperatures while moving through thigh-deep snow, executing battle drills and establishing cold-weather SOP's.

3rd PLT executes M500 qualification



1st PLT during LTA battle drill training.

Communications Classes: A Co, combined the battle drill week with a week of much needed communication systems classes, taught by all of the company Radio Telephone Operators (RTO's). These classes covered everything from basic radio procedure, and the operation and loading of ASIP, MBITR, ANCD systems, to the creation and implementation of Field Expedient Antenna's. These classes not only provided new soldiers the opportunity to familiarize themselves with basic communications skills, but also ensured that team leaders and RTO's were qualified and competent on all company communications equipment.



Buddy Team Live Fire: 17-19 FEB 09 A Co executed the first live fire of the year, introducing the "Immortals" to a Buddy Team Live Fire exercise on Range 32/33. All A-Co buddy teams were able to certify on six different live fire and maneuver lanes, utilizing three different weapons systems, M-4, M249, and M203. Techniques from Close-Quarters-Marksmanship (CQM), to proper room clearing and buddy bounding were instructed and supervised by two MLARM Certified NCO's. All A-Co Soldiers worked

1st PLT soldiers executing the Buddy Team live-fire lane #1

Combatives: for 3 hours twice a month, "Immortals" have moved to McGrath to engage in Ground Fighting Technique (GFT) training. Instructed by three Modern Army Combatives level II trainers, the "Immortals" have been successful in training GFT. The purpose has been for A-Co soldiers to be given the opportunity to push each-other to the limit, forcing them to gain an appreciation for the limits of their bodies, and the confidence to close with an opponent.



2nd PLT Soldiers executing Ground Fighting Techniques.



1st PLT soldiers "Take the Hill" overlooking "The Cut" (45th Armored Division Rd)

Company Foot Marches: Every Wednesday each week, the "Immortals" set out in platoon size elements to execute tactical foot marches over uneven terrain, in order to prepare A Co soldiers for a cold weather combat environment. Foot movements have included waist high snow, dense woods, and tough hill climbs, as well as the inevitable combat simulated casualty evacuation. Over the course of the last two months, A-Co soldiers have seen a significant change in platoon movement, despite moving under increased weight in excess of 75 lbs. in addition to individual weapons systems and communications equipment. The "Immortals" have set a high bar for training, and have met and surpassed the standard time and time again.



ACO CHANGE OF COMMAND

By PFC Gabriel Vieira

With Captain Ryan F. Liebhaber leaving the immortals of A Co, CPT Darrell Stepter steps in to take command and continue his career as the immortals commander. Captain Ryan F. Liebhaber was commissioned in the Infantry in 2001 upon his graduation from West Point. CPT Liebhaber's previous assignments include the command of Troop A, 1-89 Cavalry, and platoon leaderships with Company C, 3D U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard), and Company F, 51st Infantry (Long Range Surveillance). He has deployed twice in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, including the 2nd Brigade's most recent 15-month deployment to South Baghdad.

His military education includes the Infantry Officer Basic Course, the Ranger Course, the Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leader Course, and the Infantry Captain Career Course. His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Army Accommodation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Combat Infantryman's Badge, Expert Infantryman's Badge, Ranger Tab, Parachutists Badge and Scuba Diver Badge. He has been married to his wife Niccole for five years and they have three children together: Ryan Jr. (3), Peter (2), and Gianna (born December 8th).

CPT Liebhaber is moving to the 2nd Brigade staff until he begins an Army sponsored graduate program next summer.



The Immortals stand ready to accept their new commander, CPT Darrell Stepter (photo by PFC Gabriel Vieira)

CPT Darrell Stepter hails from Granada Hills, California. Youngest of two, he attended Van Nuys High School and upon graduation was admitted to the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. On 21 June 2003, Darrell graduated with a Bachelors Degree in Applied Mathematics and was commissioned a 2LT in the Armor Branch. 2LT Stepter attended the Armor Officer's Basic and Cavalry Scout Leader's Courses in Fort Knox, Kentucky. Upon completion of these courses 2LT Stepter reported to his first duty station Fort Richardson, Alaska. Darrell's first duty position was Rifle Platoon Leader in A Co, 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry Regiment, 172d Stryker Brigade Combat Team. As a Platoon Leader Darrell deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-06 where he served for 6 months in Mosul, and 6 months in Rawah. Upon the unforeseen extension of the 172 SBCT, CPT Stepter became the Battalion Assistant Operations Officer and TAC Platoon Leader. Upon redeployment, CPT Stepter branch transferred to Infantry. He then attended the Infantry Maneuver Captain's Career Course, Airborne, and Ranger Schools.

CPT Stepter arrived at Fort Drum in August 2008 and served as assistant Chief of Operations for the 2d Brigade Combat Team. His awards and decorations include Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Iraqi Campaign Medal, Valorous Unit Award, Ranger Tab, Expert Infantryman Badge, Combat Action Badge, and Parachutist Wings.



The 4-31 IN battalion Commander LTC Richard Greene conducts the passing of the company guidon as CPT Liebhaber relinquishes command of Alpha company to CPT Stepter (photo by PFC Gabriel Vieira)



BLACKHAWKS ALWAYS TRAINING

By 1LT Jack Mooney

B/ 4-31, FSO

In the past month Bravo Company has been busy and the soldiers have been working very hard. Bravo Company has conducted machine gun training, a stress shoot, call for fire training, a team leaders course, multiple road marches and a buddy team live fire.

The stress shoot was ran by 2nd Platoon at Range 21 and really got the Blackhawks heart rate up. It started when the soldiers were dropped off by F Co. and foot marched the remaining 3 miles to the range. Once they got to the range they received their range brief and then one squad at a time begin the stress shoot. The stress shoot consisted of a 500yd ruck run to the 100yd firing line where they fired a magazine from the standing position. As soon as the squad was complete and the squad leader ensured the rifles were clear they ran back to the 400yd firing line and fired from the prone position using their rucks as support and cover. They then ran to the 200yd firing line and fired from the kneeling position. They then ran from the 200yd firing line to the 300yd firing line where they fired from the prone unsupported position, after emptying their mags they then ran back to the start point where they started and the time was stopped. Each squad conducted two iterations of the stress shoot that day



Once every squad had finished shooting 2nd PLT began adding all the scores. The winners were announced in the following days and it was SSG Sharp's squad with the highest score. The score was based on both number of hits by the squad and total time to complete the lane. The winning squad was recognized this past Friday by the Brigade Commander and CSM in a ceremony held at Bravo Company.

The Blackhawks have also been continually preparing for the rigors of Afghanistan by conducting foot marches with an increasing load and increasing distances. The soldiers conducted three foot marches this month: a three miler, an eight miler, and a twelve miler while carrying a 40lb ruck. The Blackhawks will not stop there, they will increase our load another 5 lbs and conduct a 4, 6, 8, and 12 mile foot march over the next month.

The Blackhawks have just as busy of a schedule in the upcoming months where they will be conducting Off-Post-Training and squad and platoon live fires. But until then good job on all the hard work and continue to train hard.

BRAVO COMPANY'S NEWEST AMERICAN CITIZAN

By SPC Jeffery Kyle

B/ 4-31

Joined by 32 of his fellow Bravo Company, 4-31 IN soldiers, SPC Josue Luberrisse, 22, took the Oath of Citizenship on 19 Feb

2009 in the Onondaga County Courthouse in Syracuse, NY. SPC Luberrisse is a native of Haiti and was among 55 other immigrants from 35 countries becoming United States citizens.

According to Luberrisse, he dreamed of joining the U.S. Army ever since he was a boy growing up in Haiti. "It feels great to become a citizen," he said to the reporter for the Syracuse Post-Standard. "It's like a dream come true. I can be what I want to be and have opportunities in my life." Other Bravo Company soldiers who are currently not citizens were inspired by Luberrisse to get started with their citizenship process. PV2 Adnant Biba said that he is also interested in becoming a U.S. Citizen. SPC Justin Abadilla, one of the Bravo Company Soldiers who accompanied SPC Luberrisse to Onondaga County Courthouse, said that he was inspired by the way that the other participants treated him and the other Soldiers. "Other people were coming up to us to have their picture taken with us," said SPC Abadilla. "Everyone at the courthouse was extremely helpful and appreciated us and [SPC] Luberrisse being there."

Congratulations Luberrisse from all of your friends in Bravo Company.



NEW START FOR CHARLIE

By 1LT John Turner

C/ 4-31, FSO

It's the start of a new year and Charlie Company is back at it again. With less than 300 days to the next deployment training is more and more focused towards the Battalion's anticipated mission for Afghanistan. Upon return from Christmas exodus each Platoon hit the ground running as we finally began to consolidate and reorganize after training at West Point all last summer and immediately redeploying from JRTC. Classes were administered at the BDE Call for Fire Trainer (CFFT) for each PLT, which primarily focused on training Team Leaders and above on basic CFF missions, in order to prepare Key Leaders for the scheduled Walk and Shoot during Off-Post Training at Fort Pickett, VA.



While the winter months continued to unfold Charlie Company took the opportunity to gear up and test out the newly issued ECWCS (Gen 3) as we conducted LANDNAV training at the local EIB course. Refusing to succumb to the weather leaders strapped on Snow shoes to validate the course. The snow provided quite a challenge but Charlie Rock pressed on as TM's maneuvered through the knee-deep snow in order to complete the course marking the beginning of our first major training for the year.

The following weeks came fast and furious as we conducted training at the Machine Gun Range 20C, CQM at 41A-C, and MOUT at Training Area 11E.

During the cold first week of February, Charlie Company successfully completed day and night qualification of all the M240 and M249 SAW's. The soldiers conducted zeroing on paper targets at 10 meters. Then they continued on to the pop up targets for day and night fires. This week when the fires were going on the temperature got to negative 20 with the wind chill. In true Charlie fashion, we endured the cold to get all the training done and even had enough time left over to have a competition between gun teams. The teams ran to the firing line and set-up all their equipment, engage targets and practiced down gunner drills.

During the second week in February, our company focused on CQM training. Proficiency in CQM is basically the ability to effectively and accurately engage an enemy in close proximity, typically at a distance of 25m or less. Members of 1st Platoon planned and executed the range details for the company. This training included engaging targets at distances of 5-25m utilizing several different stances. In other words, our soldiers learned to properly engage an enemy who may appear to their front and/or sides, requiring them to execute a 90° turn prior to firing upon the enemy. All soldiers executed a series of target tables that progressively increased in difficulty to eventually force them to distinguish between several different targets. In addition, soldiers fired the same target tables at night utilizing both Night Vision capabilities (NVG's/NOD's) with laser devices for aiming and Tactical Flashlights (TAC Lights) which are attached to their weapons. As a culminating event, our soldiers conducted a CQM Stress Shoot on the second and final day of firing. We presented our soldiers the challenge of moving within their Fire Teams for about a half mile until they reached the range. Mid-way along the course, our Medics were stationed to stop each team and make them conduct a CASEVAC which required them to assess a dummy casualty, load it onto a litter, and move the last quarter of a mile carrying the litter. After this physically and mentally draining movement, they had to positively identify and accurately engage targets in close proximity. Such training is vital to our overall mission readiness as our soldiers may be tasked to enter confined spaces such as caves or buildings. All in all, our soldiers performed very well in all aspects of the training.

During the week of 17 FEB 09 through 20 FEB 09 C Co. 4-31 IN prepared for and conducted MOUT training at Training Area 11E. Squads and teams intensely trained on closing with and destroying the enemy in an urban environment. The company trained through the harsh cold and wet conditions, while at the same time developing junior leadership and sharpening the spear head of the 4-31 IN Polar Bears. The Company culminated their training by utilizing Ultimate Training Munitions (UTM's), during which Soldiers used their MOUT skills in a realistic environment under the threat of being shot with frozen paint tipped bullets. The fun and realistic training resulted in unit cohesion and professional development of Charlie Rock, 4-31 IN Polar Bears.

Now that we're in the full swing of training we still have several more culminating events before getting re-evaluated at JRTC. These next two months Charlie Rock looks forward to strengthening its stance as we pick up and conduct Off Post Training at Fort Pickett and immediately jump into Squad and Platoon Evaluations. By then, the Rock will be ready to show force during the Company CALFEX before leaving down to JRTC.



DELTA COMPANY TAKES A SKI TRIP

By 2LT Lewis Vine

D/ 4-31

Delta company recently took a ski trip to Dry Hill. In preparation, our Soldiers sat down as a company and watched "The Last Ridge," a film documenting 10th Mountain Division's role in Italy during World War II. Drawing from members of the American Alpine Club and National Ski Association, the 10th Mountain Division was the first American unit to train specifically to fight on skis at high altitudes in inclement weather. At Camp Hale, they trained at elevations in excess of 9,000 feet with over 100 pounds of gear. Inculcated with the meaning behind the trip from the documentary, our Soldiers headed out to Dry Hill on Friday, February 6th. While both the loads carried and elevations traversed were notably less intense, Delta's trip was both in keeping with the traditions of the division and esprit de corps.

The Punishers had over a 90% attendance rate. Our soldiers were provided the necessary equipment free of charge by contributions from MWR funds and the lift tickets were provided by Dry Hill free of charge as part of their Friday military special, allowing our Soldiers to enjoy an all day ski trip for free. Even before we arrived, it was apparent from our "rehearsals," in the company area that many - if not most - of our Soldiers would need ski lessons. From putting on boots to properly attaching them to the skis, it was obvious that most of us were novices. Once we got to the hill, the instructors divided the beginners into several groups. We went over putting on the boots, attaching the skis, how to walk on them, how to move forward, body position, turning, the whole nine yards. Crawl, walk, run, right? Admittedly, the crawl stage took a little while for some of us, but within a couple hours, most of the company had a basic grasp of the essentials of skiing. The instructors took the groups up the ski lift for their first official ride down the slopes. The initial couple of runs were time consuming for some, but by the end of the day the company was moving down the slopes in good time, with only a few, laughable falls.

We headed back to the company area around 1600, after a solid five hours of skiing. Punishers who were hesitant or critical of the outing found themselves enjoying the slopes by the end of our day at Dry Hill. Our Soldiers walked away not only with a cheap, safe, hobby to help them stay active during the winter months but also with a new found respect for our Mountain Infantry forefathers. Just as the foundation laid at Camp Hale prepared the 10th Mountain Division for the vicious fight at Mt. Belvedere, so will our emulation of our predecessors' efforts allow us to continue to Climb to Glory!



FOX COMPANY SAYS GOODBYE TO CO

By PFC Gabriel Vieira

CPT Swearingen received his commission from the US Army Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, GA in October 2003 following 15 years enlisted; four in the United States Marines and 11 in the United States Army. His enlisted assignments include the 2nd Marine Air Wing, MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina, the 25th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, the 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, and the 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, New York. His overseas tours include Japan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Republic of Korea, and Iraq.



CPT Swearingen's first assignment after commissioning was to the 19th Theater Support Command as a Movement Control Officer in the 25th Transportation Battalion, Pusan, Republic of Korea. After his return, CPT Swearingen graduated from Excelsior College with a Bachelors of Science Degree in Liberal Studies focused in Management and Psychology. He was assigned to Fort Drum, New York and the 2nd Brigade Combat Team in August 2005 as the 210th Brigade Support Battalion Transformation Officer before assuming duties as the Distribution Platoon Leader in F Company, then the Fuel and Water Platoon Leader and Executive Officer of A Company. Once deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom he moved to the battalion staff as an Operations Battle Captain until reassignment to F Company as the Executive Officer in November 2006.

After taking command of F Company in March 2007 in Yusufiyah, Iraq, CPT Swearingen led the company during combat operations which featured the establishment of Combat Outpost Corregidor, support of DUSTWUN search operations, build up of the battalion-sized Patrol Base Dragon, and the establishment of a permanent patrol base west of the Euphrates River before redeployment in November 2007. Since their return from Iraq, the company completed reset operations, deployed in support of Cadet Summer Training at West Point, New York and conducted training at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana.

CPT Swearingen's military education includes the Primary Leadership Development Course, the Basic Noncommissioned Officers Course, the Transportation Officer Basic Course, Air Assault Course, and the Pathfinder Course. His awards include the Bronze Star Medal, the Army Commendation Medal (5 OLC), Army Achievement Medal (3 OLC), Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Iraqi Campaign Medal, NATO Medal, Kosovo Campaign Medal with Bronze Star, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon with Numeral 4, the Combat Action Badge, the Senior Aviation Badge, the Pathfinder Badge, and the Air Assault Badge.

He is married to the former Ms. Nakhaly Sananikone of Portland, Oregon and they have two daughters, Cadet Erika Swearingen (18) who attends Elmira College in the ROTC Nursing Program and Ms. Sara Swearingen (17) who is a junior at Immaculate Heart Central in Watertown, New York.



FOX COMPANY SAYS HELLO TO NEW CO

By PFC Gabriel Vieira

CPT McCall received his commission from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 2003, with a Bachelors of Science Degree in Military History and Military Art and Science.

After attending the Infantry Officer's Basic course at Fort Benning, Georgia he was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment in the 3rd Brigade Combat Team of the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He served as the Assistant S-1 before assuming duties as a Rifle Platoon Leader in C Company. His battalion was reorganized and re-flagged as 1st Squadron, 73rd Cavalry, and he was assigned duties as a Reconnaissance Platoon Leader in A Troop before deploying in support of relief efforts for Hurricane Katrina in September of 2005. In February 2006, he was assigned as the executive officer of C Troop, 1-73rd Cavalry.

In July 2006, CPT McCall's troop was attached to the 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment for deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom for a period of five months. His battalion acted as a rapid reaction force, assisting various other units within Iraq. Within two weeks of redeployment, his battalion was alerted to deploy in support of the surge strategy in Iraq until November 2007.

CPT McCall's duty positions include Battalion Assistant S-1, Rifle Platoon Leader, Mounted Reconnaissance Platoon Leader, Company Executive Officer, Operations Battle Captain, Liaison Officer, and Battalion Adjutant.

His military education consists of the Infantry Officer's Basic Course, Airborne School, Air Assault School, Ranger School, Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leaders Course, Jumpmaster Course, the Combined Logistics Captain's Career Course, Support Operations Course, Army Maintenance Manager's Course and the Joint Course on Logistics.



CPT McCall's awards include the Army Commendation Medal (3 OLC), the Army Achievement Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal, the Iraqi Campaign Medal with Bronze Star, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Expert Infantryman's Badge, Parachutist's Badge, Air Assault Badge, and the Ranger Tab

CPT McCall entered the service from Orlando, Florida and his parents Larry and Vickie McCall currently reside in Baxley, Georgia.



The 4-31 INF and the 210 BSB crests at the base are bridged by the head of an arctic fox symbolizing F Company's relationship and affiliation with both battalions. The white fox is referred to as the Polar Fox in honor of our support to the Polar Bears, and is named Chuck after SGT Curtis "Chuck" Norris, our first combat casualty. He carries a bayonet in his mouth in honor of the company's service in Iraq where 91% of deployed personnel earned the Combat Action Badge, and symbolizes our readiness to serve again. Chuck is crowned with the 10th Mountain Division Crest to show the company's never-ending Climb to Glory as part of the 2nd BCT. The Totem Pole is topped with the national symbol of the United States, an American Bald Eagle, with wings outstretched and ready to take flight in the defense of freedom. The pole stands eight feet tall with a wing span of seven feet and was dedicated in December 2008. The artist is Mr. Mark Wilson of Oneida, New York.



The Chaplains Corner



4-31 IN Chaplain, CPT Min
(photo by PFC Gabriel Vieira)

How time flies. It seems as if the year 2009 began just yesterday but it's already middle of February and by the time you read this, it will be March, so much closer to the upcoming deployment to Afghanistan in December 09.

I am confident that Soldiers are well prepared and continue to prepare for the deployment. How about you, spouses? Are you prepared to take on the challenges of the deployment? Do you know what to do while your Soldier is deployed for a whole year? How are you preparing for it?

Let me tell you a story that might help you make good decisions for better preparations. It is told by Stephen Covey, in his book, *First Things First*.

One day a management expert was speaking to a group of business students and, to drive home a point, used an illustration.

As this man stood in front of the group of high-powered over-achievers he said, "Okay, time for a quiz." Then he pulled out a one-gallon, wide-mouthed mason jar and set it on a table in front of him. Then he produced about a dozen fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them, one at a time, into the jar.

When the jar was filled to the top and no more rocks would fit inside, he asked, "Is this jar full?" Everyone in the class said, "Yes." Then he said, "Really?" He reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. Then he dumped some gravel in and shook the jar causing pieces of gravel to work themselves down into the spaces between the big rocks.

Then he smiled and asked the group once more, "Is the jar full?" By this time the class was onto him. "Probably not," one of them answered. "Good!" he replied. And he reached under the table and brought out a bucket of sand. He started dumping the sand in and it went into all the spaces left between the rocks and the gravel. Once more he asked the question, "Is this jar full?"

"No!" the class shouted. Once again he said, "Good!" Then he grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it in until the jar was filled to the brim. Then he looked up at the class and asked, "What is the point of this illustration?"

One eager beaver raised his hand and said, "The point is, no matter how full your schedule is, if you try really hard, you can always fit some more things into it!"

"No," the speaker replied, "that's not the point. The truth this illustration teaches us is: If you don't put the big rocks in first, you'll never get them in at all."

So, what are the "Big Rocks" in your life, especially as a military couple?

Some of you might have to work on communications more while others need to work on handling finances. For some, it might be the in-laws or the children. All of us need to work on trusting our spouses more.

Talk to one another. Find out what the "Big Rocks" of your lives are. Find out what needs to be done before you are separated for a year. If you need help, please contact me or others who can assist you with your questions and concerns.

May Peace and Grace of God be with you,
Hochang Min

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